CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A process of preparing ortho substituted phenylamines comprising contacting phenylhydroxylamine, optionally substituted with at least one inert substituent, with a nucleophilic reagent in the presence of a manganese oxide at a temperature between about 10° C and about 170° C and a pressure from subatmospheric to superatmospheric such that an ortho substituted phenylamine, optionally correspondingly substituted with at least one inert substituent, is ~~predominantly~~ formed.

2. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the phenylhydroxylamine is unsubstituted phenylhydroxylamine.

3. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the phenylhydroxylamine is substituted with at least one member selected from the group consisting of C_1-C_{10} alkyl, C_6-C_{10} aryl, and C_6-C_{10} alkaryl moieties.

4. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the nucleophilic reagent is selected from the group consisting of ammonia, water, C_1-C_{20} aliphatic alcohols, phenols, halides, and amines having the formula R'_2NH wherein each R' may independently be a hydrogen, C_1-C_{20} aliphatic, C_4-C_8 alicyclic, or C_6-C_{15} aryl or alkaryl moiety.

5. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the nucleophilic reagent is an amine represented by the formula R'_2NH wherein each R' is independently a hydrogen, C_1-C_5 alkyl, or C_6-C_{10} phenyl or alkyl-substituted phenyl moiety.

6. (Original) The process of claim 5 wherein the nucleophilic reagent is aniline.

7. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the molar ratio of nucleophilic reagent to phenylhydroxylamine ranges from about 2 to about 100.

8. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing ortho substituted phenylamines comprising

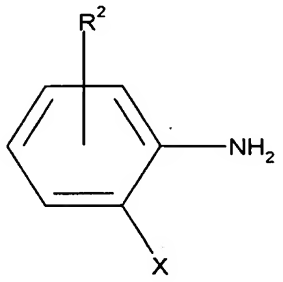
contracting phenylhydroxylamine, optionally substituted with at least one inert substituent, with a nucleophilic reagent, the molar ratio of nucleophilic reagent to phenylhydroxylamine ranging from about 2 to about 100, the contacting of the phenylhydroxylamine and nucleophilic reagent being conducted in the absence of oxygen and in the presence of a catalyst that is a cryptomelane-type manganese oxide Octahedral Molecular Sieve, with a composition of $KMn_8O_{16}\cdot nH_2O$ (n = 0.5-10) in which said molecular sieve comprises MnO_6 octahedral structural units that are edge and corner shared to form a 4.6 x 4.6 tunnels as a result of 2 x 2 arrangement of octahedra, in which the potassium ions are present in the tunnels with ~~a small amount of~~ water and said potassium ions are ion-exchanged by H^+ ions using nitric acid to obtain the acidic form of said sieve at temperatures ranging from about 70° C to about 120° C, whereby an optionally-substituted ortho substituted phenylamine is formed ~~in amounts equal to or greater than any concurrently formed para isomer~~.

9. (Original) The process of claim 8 wherein the phenylhydroxylamine is unsubstituted phenylhydroxylamine.

10. (Original) The process of claim 8 wherein the nucleophilic reagent is selected from the group consisting of ammonia, water, C_1-C_{20} aliphatic alcohols, phenols, halides, and amines having the formula R'_2NH wherein each R' may independently be a hydrogen, C_1-C_{20} aliphatic, C_4-C_8 alicyclic, or C_6-C_{15} aryl or alkaryl moiety.

11. (Original) The process of claim 8 wherein the nucleophilic reagent is aniline.

12. (Original) The process of claim 8 wherein the ortho substituted phenylamine is represented by the formula:



wherein R^2 is hydrogen or at least one C_1-C_{10} alkyl moiety, and X is selected from hydroxy, halo, C_1-C_{20} alkoxy, phenoxy, and amino of the formula -NR'_2 wherein each R' is independently a C_1-C_{20} aliphatic, C_4-C_8 alicyclic, or C_6-C_{15} aryl or alkaryl moiety.

13. (Original) The process of claim 12 wherein X is amino and the ortho substituted phenylamine is a o-phenylenediamine.

14. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 13 wherein ~~thcortho~~the ortho substituted phenylamine is o-aminodiphenylamine represented by the formula: